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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 003218

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TAGS: PREL PGOV IZ

SUBJECT: NEW ARAB AMBASSADORS TO IRAQ: SETTING PARAMETERS
FOR OUR ASSISTANCE

REF: KUWAIT 1007

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Action Request: This message provides Embassy Baghdad's assessment of logistical and other support we are able to offer newly arriving ambassadors from neighboring Arab countries. We seek the Department's concurrence with this approach and request that Embassies Abu Dhabi, Amman, Manama, Kuwait, Riyadh and Cairo be instructed to share the contents of paras 5-8 and 10 with host governments so that those governments have an accurate understanding of the kinds of assistance we are able to offer.

Here They Come

¶2. (C) The expected post-Eid arrival of Ambassadors from the UAE, Jordan, Bahrain and Kuwait will mark an important milestone in Iraq's continuing reintegration into the region. Following this summer's string of Arab high-level visits, their arrival will underline greater regional confidence in Iraq's future. As such, there is a strong U.S. policy interest in facilitating these developments. Indeed, our message over the past months has been that the U.S. would support Arab embassies seeking to reopen in Baghdad. The time has come to define the parameters of that support. We do not want to be seen as indifferent to the real security concerns, or the day-to-day challenges of living in Baghdad, that these arriving diplomats will face. At the same time, our experience over the past months and our ongoing resource constraints show that our assistance cannot be open ended. We need to be clear on what we can and cannot do to assist them. Moreover, our initial responses will set precedents for the future.

¶3. (C) The Arab countries that have decided to return ambassadors to Baghdad continue to perceive GOI capabilities, especially with regard to security, as inadequate and have requested specific U.S. assistance.

-- Jordanian diplomats who arrived two weeks ago informally requested approval to fly to/from Amman via U.S. Milair for reasons of convenience and security. They have also expressed frustration with the lack of support they are getting from the GOI.

-- Kuwaiti Ambassador-designate Ali al-Mou, min expects Coalition Forces to handle his security when he arrives (at least for an initial period), that he will be permitted to fly to/from/within Iraq on U.S. Milair, and that he will have access to U.S. Embassy dining and recreation facilities (ref A).

-- On September 30, Embassy Manama alerted us of an impending October 7 visit of Ambassador-designate Maliki and a Bahraini request for security coverage between Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) and the International Zone (IZ).

-- On September 28, the UAE requested U.S. security coverage for a 10-12 day visit of newly named Ambassador Abdullah al-Shihhi, expected to begin on October 3.

14. (C) We assume other Arab diplomatic delegations will seek similar types of support as they move to restore full diplomatic relations with Iraq. Providing the type of assistance outlined above would have significant resource implications. It would also deflect responsibility for addressing these issues away from the GOI, where it rightly should lie. We need to communicate clearly the parameters of our support both to the GOI and to each of the countries concerned. Below is Embassy Baghdad's enumeration of these parameters in specific terms.

Proposed Levels of Embassy Support

15. (SBU) Security: In general, Embassy/RSO should not provide transportation/security between BIAP and the IZ, except under extraordinary circumstances. All transportation/security to/from BIAP and within the IZ should be worked directly between the third country government and the GOI. RSO can share threat information, as appropriate, and offer advice on a range of security issues as well as facilitate contact with private security companies. For more details on specific assistance RSO can provide to these arriving delegations, see para 10 below.

16. (SBU) MilAir: As a general rule, we should not make MilAir flights available to third country diplomats. Baghdad

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is serviced by regularly scheduled commercial flights to/from Amman, as well as civilian charter flights to/from other regional destinations. These should be the main modes of transportation in and out of the country. If third country governments are concerned about the security of these flights, they can dispatch their own MilAir to transport their officials. MNF-I can facilitate flight clearances and other logistical requirements at BIAP. We can consider allowing third country diplomats to fly on U.S. MilAir on a case-by-case basis if the circumstances absolutely demand it.

17. (SBU) New Embassy Sites: The Embassy is working closely with the MFA to turn over IZ properties currently in U.S. possession to the GOI, including prospective new embassy sites in the diplomatic zone. Third country governments need to work directly with the MFA to identify and prepare the specific sites for their new embassies. This is already happening and should continue. All inquiries on the process should be referred to the MFA's Ambassador Srood Najib, the GOI official designated to handle this issue. If requested, the Embassy can offer suggestions on trusted and qualified contractors; these contractors could be hired to renovate and prepare their Embassy sites.

18. (SBU) Access to the New Embassy Compound (NEC)/Use of Embassy Facilities: While it would be a nice gesture to offer access to the NEC gym, pool and DFAC to third country diplomats (given the dearth of dining and recreational options in the IZ), the number of people who will be using those facilities is already twice what the facilities are designed for. Additionally, we do not currently extend those benefits (except Liberty Pool) to any other diplomatic missions. Access to the NEC for these diplomats should be at the same level as diplomats from other countries.

Conclusion: GOI Must Dedicate More Resources

19. (SBU) We have a strong interest in ensuring these new Arab embassies get stood up quickly and turn their attention to the reason they are here: strengthening their countries'

bilateral relations with Iraq. We can assist, but this should be in specific, clearly delineated areas. The GOI must take on the lion's share of this work. We will use upcoming meetings with Foreign Minister Zebari and other key GOI leaders to press home this point. Given the multitude of specific needs these missions will have, the MFA should set up a special, appropriately staffed unit within the Protocol Department to assist these missions as needed, particularly during this crucial start-up period.

Specific Security Assistance Extended to Other Embassies

¶10. (SBU) Below is a list of the specific types of security assistance RSO offers to other embassies in Baghdad. We can offer the same to the new Arab embassies as they establish themselves.

-- Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), as we do for other allies.

-- Conduct security assessments/surveys to help them improve their security posture.

-- Share non-classified threat information on a normal basis, and classified threat information on a case-by-case basis if it involves them.

-- Meet with them, as we do with other allies, and liaise with their security elements to provide background on security conditions in Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq.

-- Assist them in establishing security agreements with the GOI to improve security support from the GOI.

-- Provide, on a resource available basis, along with DoD, incident response and contingency management support.

-- Potentially include them in training offerings that we have. For example, Hostage Awareness, WMD Awareness, etc.

-- Share our Public Announcements, Travel Advisories, Consular Information Sheets and Warden Notices with them.

-- Support their requests for MNF-I and other badges/ID media to facilitate their travel in/out of the IZ and Baghdad.

-- Provide them with guidance on best security practices for facilities protection in Baghdad and Iraq.

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-- Support their efforts to join various information sharing forums such as the Diplomatic Protective Liaison Working Group (DPLWG).

-- Support their interest in the PSD working group; support them, or their private security provider (Control Risk Groups) in the private security contractor forum.

-- Facilitate their interface with DoD regarding ECM products and the unclassified version of Blue Force Tracker (BFT).

¶11. (SBU) Virtually all of the above -- which involve sharing information, experience and contacts -- are relatively inexpensive or require limited time to provide, yet could be very beneficial to a small mission.

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